

Phillips John S

Rear admiral USN

Retired 1/1/47

Present address (checked 12/23/33)
1600 S. Barton Street, Arlington Village, Arlington,
Virginia

CAPTAIN JOHN SPINNING PHILLIPS, U. S. NAVY

Captain Phillips, born in Alexandria, Virginia, February 28, 1895, attended The Trinity Church School, New York, N. Y., before his appointment from the Sixth District of New Jersey to the U. S. Naval Academy in September, 1914. He was graduated from the Academy and commissioned Ensign with the Class of 1918 in June, 1917, and subsequently advanced through the various grades to that of Commander on June 2, 1938. On February 27, 1942, he was advanced to the rank of Captain for meritorious conduct.

After graduating from the Academy in 1917, Captain Phillips joined the U.S.S. SOUTH DAKOTA and served in that battleship throughout World War I and until September 1, 1919. The SOUTH DAKOTA was engaged in patrol and escort duties in the Atlantic in 1917 and 1918.

Captain Phillips served in the U.S.S. OKLAHOMA from September, 1919, until July, 1923, and during the following four months had communication duty in Battleship Divisions, Battle Fleet. From December, 1923, until December, 1925, he served as officer in charge Navy Recruiting Station, Seattle, Washington, with additional duty as officer in charge, Branch Hydrographic Office, Seattle, Washington, and from December, 1925, until January 1929, was executive officer of the U.S.S. FARRAGUT. He was an instructor in the Department of Ordnance and Gunnery at the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, from February, 1929, until May, 1931, and after three years duty at sea during which he served consecutively as executive officer of the destroyers BORIE and STEWART, and on the staff of Commander, Destroyer Squadron Five, he was Professor of Naval Science and Tactics in connection with the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, from June, 1934, until February, 1936. After duty as navigator of the U.S.S. ASTORIA during the next two years, he served in

the Intelligence Division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, from July, 1938, until May, 1941.

Captain Phillips assumed command of the U.S.S. NEOSHO, oiler, on June 2, 1941. The NEOSHO was at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked on December 7, 1941. For his heroism during that attack Captain Phillips was awarded the Navy Cross, with the following citation:

Navy Cross

"For distinguished service in the line of his profession during the attack on the Fleet in Pearl Harbor, T. H., by Japanese forces on December 7, 1941. When fire was opened on enemy planes, Commander Phillips realized the serious fire hazard of remaining alongside the dock as well as being in a position that prevented a battleship from getting underway, got underway immediately. Mooring lines were cut, and without the assistance of tugs, Commander Phillips accomplished the extremely difficult task of getting the ship underway from this particular berth in a most efficient manner, the difficulty being greatly increased by a battleship having capsized in the harbor."

Under Captain Phillips' command the NEOSHO operated in the Pacific during the early crucial days of the war until she was sunk during the Battle of Coral Sea. During this battle the NEOSHO was operating as part of Task Force 17. The day before the attack she had fueled the U.S.S. ASTORIA and U.S.S. YORKTOWN and a number of destroyers. On May 7, 1942, she was attacked by a group of 24 or more Japanese dive bombers. She was hit by seven Japanese aerial bombs and one suicide plane and was in a sinking condition for five days. Sixty percent of her men and officers were lost. The remainder of her crew were rescued by the U.S.S. HENLEY on May 11, after which the battered NEOSHO was sunk by gunfire from the HENLEY. Captain Phillips had been advanced to the rank of Captain on February 27, 1942, for meritorious conduct.

Captain Phillips served as Professor of Naval Science and Tactics at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York, during the remainder of 1942 and 1943. During the remainder of the World War II period he was Head of the Publicity

Security Section, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. He was on duty in the Office of Naval Intelligence, Navy Department, from September, 1945, until April, 1946, when he was relieved of active duty. He is now awaiting retirement.

In addition to the Navy Cross, Captain Phillips has the Victory Medal, Patrol Clasp (U.S.S. SOUTH DAKOTA); the Yangtze Service Medal (U.S.S. BLACK HAWK); the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal with three battle stars; the American Area Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

Captain Phillips' official address is: 3950 Vantage Avenue, North Hollywood, California. He and his wife, the former Miss Elizabeth Maybery of Covington, Kentucky, currently reside at 1400 South Barton Street, Arlington, Virginia.

11 October 1946

in reply address not the signer of
letter, but Bureau of Navigation,
Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

Refer to No.

17172- Nav-327-MM

NAVY DEPARTMENT

BUREAU OF NAVIGATION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 1, 1942.

COMMANDER JOHN SPINNING PHILLIPS, UNITED STATES NAVY.

Re: Service of.

1895 Feb 28 Born in Alexandria, Virginia.

1914 Sep 24 Appointed a Midshipman from New Jersey, 6th District.

1917 Jun 23 Det Naval Academy, and to the SOUTH DAKOTA, taking passage from Norfolk, Virginia, about July 18. (Det June 28; Rep Sept. 4).

Jun 30 Commissioned regular Ensign from the 29th day of June, 1917.

Sep 25 Accepted appointment and executed oath of office this date.

Oct 15 Lieutenant (jg). (temporary).

1918 Jul 1 Lieutenant (temporary).

1919 Sep 9 Det (SOUTH DAKOTA) and to the OKLAHOMA. (Det Sept. 1; Rep Sept. 20).

1921 Jun 10 Commissioned regular a Lieutenant (jg) from June 29, 1920. (No O and A required).

Jun 10 Commissioned regular a Lieutenant from July 1, 1920. (No O and A required).

1923 Jul 9 Det (OKLAHOMA) and to Battleship Divisions Battle Fleet for communication duty and other duty. (Det and Rep July 11).

Aug 22 Upon transfer Flag Commander Battleship Divisions, Battle Fleet, to the NEW MEXICO, August 23, report that vessel for quarters.

Oct 29 Det (Battleship Divisions, Battle Fleet) and to duty as Officer in Charge, Navy Recruiting Station, Seattle, Washington. Designated special Disbursing Agent. Authorized one month's delay. (Det Nov. 3; Rep Dec. 4).

Dec 15 To temporary additional duty as Officer in Charge, Branch Hydrographic Office, Seattle, Washington.

1925 Nov 10 Det upon necessary trans. to relief (Officer in Charge, Navy Recruiting Station, Seattle, Washington) and to the FARRAGUT for duty as Executive Officer. (Det Dec. 15; Rep Dec. 28). Det FARRAGUT January 7, 1929.

1928 Dec 4 Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. (Rep Feb. 11, 1929; Det May 29, 1931). *instructor in Dept and Summer*

1931 Feb 28 Commissioned Lieutenant Commander from December 9, 1930.

Jun 13 U.S.S. BORIE (Executive Officer). (Rep July 20, 1931; Det Jan. 28, 1932).

1932 Jan 21 U.S.S. STEWART (Executive Officer). (Rep Jan. 28; Det Feb. 27).

Jan 30 Destroyer Squadron Five (duty on Staff of Commander). (Rep Feb. 27, 1932; Det May 10, 1934).

7 my Cross
3-14.
To be returned before 1 Jan 1947
By Pers. Mfr
10-10-46

1934	Mar 24	Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. (Professor of Naval Science and Tactics, connection Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit). (Rep June 28, 1934; Det Feb. 3, 1936).
1936	Jan 30	U.S.S. ASTORIA (Navigator). (Rep Feb. 8, 1936; Det June 16, 1938).
1938	May 10	Office of Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. (Rep July 23, 1938; Det May 1, 1941). <i>Intelligence Division</i>
	Jun 20	Commissioned regular Commander from June 2, 1938.
1941	Apr 10	Commanding U.S.S. NEOSHO. (Rep June 2, 1941).

Victory Medal (USS SOUTH DAKOTA, convoy duty) - Patrol Clasp. (World War Service).
 Yangtze Service Medal - U.S.S. BLACK HAWK, 1932.

Usual residence: Oradell, N. J.

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Prof of Nav Service & Tactics
Remington Policy Inland
1942-3

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1 2/6 C in C Hodge
Head of
Security Section
Publicity
Section

Sep 1945 - April 1946 Nav Int.

awaiting retirement

local
1400 S. Barton St
Arlington Va. } copy

Miss Eliza Mayberry of
Covington Ky

To be Retired before 1 Jan 1947

Baker, MFC
10-10-46

(4-3-43) *the Sixth District of*
CAPTAIN JOHN SPINNING PHILLIPS, U.S.N.

Captain Phillips was born in Alexandria, Virginia, February 28, 1895. He attended the Trinity Church School, Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York. He entered the Naval Academy from New Jersey in 1914 and upon graduation with the Class of 1918 in June 1917, he was assigned to the U.S.S. SOUTH DAKOTA, engaged in escort duty, and served in this vessel until the end of the World War. # In September, 1919, ~~he~~ ^{captain} was transferred to the U.S.S. OKLAHOMA; in July, 1923, he was ordered to Battleship Divisions, Battle Fleet, for communication duty and in October of that year he assumed duty as Officer in Charge, Navy Recruiting Station, Seattle, Washington, with temporary additional duty as Officer in Charge Branch Hydrographic Office at that station.

Captain Phillips served as Executive Officer ~~in~~ ^{of} the U.S.S. FARRAGUT, Flagship, Destroyer Division Thirty-one, Battle Fleet, from November 1925 to January 1929, when he reported to the Naval Academy for a tour of duty that lasted until May 1931. Following that assignment he served as Executive Officer, ~~first~~ ^{commanding} of the U.S.S. BORIE and ~~later~~ of the U.S.S. STEWART. In January 1932 he was assigned ~~to~~ duty on the U.S.S. BLACK HAWK on the Staff of the Commander, Destroyer Squadron Five, Asiatic Fleet. From March 1934 until February 1936 he was Professor of Naval Science and Tactics at Northwestern University in connection with the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit. He was navigator of the U.S.S. ASTORIA from February 1936 to June 1938 when he reported to the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D.C. At the completion of that duty he was assigned to command the U.S.S. NEOSHO. After the NEOSHO was sunk in the Coral Sea in May 1942, Captain Phillips was ordered to his present duty as Professor of Naval Science and Tactics at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York.

He was promoted to the rank of Captain February 27, 1942, for meritorious conduct.

On March 14, 1942, the Navy Department announced Captain Phillips was awarded the Navy Cross with the following citation:

"For distinguished service in the line of his profession during the attack on the Fleet in Pearl Harbor, T.H., by Japanese forces on December 7, 1941. When fire was opened on enemy planes, Commander Phillips realized the serious fire hazard of remaining alongside the dock as well as being in a position that prevented a battleship from getting underway, got underway immediately. Mooring lines were cut, and without the assistance of tugs, Commander Phillips accomplished the extremely difficult task of getting t

ship underway from this particular berth in a most efficient manner, the difficulty being greatly increased by a battleship having capsized in the harbor."

Captain Phillips has the Victory Medal, Patrol Clasp for service during the World War, and Yangtze Service Medal, U.S.S. BLACK HAWK, 1932, and American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp.

His usual residence is Oradell, New Jersey.

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*Amie Fox
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Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.

156

DATE OCT 8 1944

PHILLIPS, Capt.
John S. Phillips

Capt. John S. Phillips Speaker For Navy Day Luncheon Here

His Ship Sent Down In The Battle Of Coral Sea

Capt. John S. Phillips, USN, veteran of Pacific fighting in World War II and holder of the Navy Cross, the Navy's highest award for heroism, will be principal speaker at Montgomery's Navy Day observance on Oct. 27. Henry C. Meader, chairman of the Montgomery Navy Day committee, announced Saturday.

The Navy Day observance, Mr. Meader said, will take the form of a luncheon at the Jefferson Davis Hotel on Friday, Oct. 27. The luncheon is sponsored by the Montgomery Kiwanis Club, but all civic organizations will take part.

Capt. Phillips has had a long and distinguished naval career beginning with his graduation from the U. S. Naval Academy in June, 1917. He was a classmate of Comdr. W. O. Baldwin, former vice-president of the First National Bank, who now is stationed in Washington.

Capt. Phillips, who is on duty at headquarters, commander-in-chief, U. S. Fleet, Washington, has the following decorations in addition to the Navy Cross: The Victory Medal, Patrol Clasp; the Yangtze Service Medal; the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; and the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal. His usual residence is Oradell, New Jersey.

Born in Alexandria, Va., on Feb. 28, 1895, he attended the Trinity Church School, Trinity Church, Wall Street, N. Y. He entered the Naval Academy from New Jersey in 1914 and, upon graduation with the class of 1918 in June, 1917, he was assigned to the U. S. S. South Dakota, engaged in escort duty, and served on this vessel until the end of World War I.

In September, 1919, he was transferred to the U. S. S. Oklahoma; in July, 1923, he was ordered to Battleship Divisions,



CAPT. JOHN S. PHILLIPS

Battle Fleet, for communication duty, and in October of that year he assumed duty as officer in charge, Navy Recruiting Station, Seattle, Wash., with temporary additional duty as officer in charge, Branch Hydrographic Office at that station.

Capt. Phillips served as executive officer on the U. S. S. Faragut, Flagship, Destroyer Division 31, Battle Fleet, from November, 1925, to January, 1929, when he reported to the Naval Academy for a tour that lasted until May, 1931.

Following that assignment he served as executive officer, first of the U. S. S. Borie and later of U. S. S. Black Hawk on the staff of the commander, Destroyer Squadron Five, Asiatic Fleet.

From March, 1934, until February, 1936, he was professor of Naval Science and Tactics at Northwestern University, in connection with the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit.

He was navigator of the U. S. S. Astoria from February, 1936, to June, 1938, when he reported to the chief of naval operations, Navy Department, Washington. At the completion of that duty he was assigned to command the U. S. S. Neosho. After the Neosho was sunk in the Coral Sea in May, 1942, Capt. Phillips was professor of Naval Science and Tactics at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N. Y., until June 18, 1943, when he was ordered to duty at his present post.

He was promoted to the rank of captain on Feb. 27, 1942, for meritorious conduct.

Capt. John S. Phillips, U. S. N., 1400 South Barton street, Arlington, recently received the Silver Star Medal for gallantry and intrepidity in action as commanding officer of the tanker Neosho in the Battle of the Coral Sea on May 7, 1942, the Navy announced.

When his ship was seriously damaged and violent fires were started by bomb hits and a crashing plane, he continued to fight off the enemy aircraft, causing the destruction of three and damage to at least four others, the accompanying citation states.

Later, with the Neosho in sinking condition, he assembled all survivors, insured the welfare and safety of the wounded and supervised a successful abandonment of ship.

STAR

11-16-46

PH. - Phillips
DIVISION OF
PRESS INTELLIGENCE
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Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.
156

DATE

OCT 15 1944
p.

Hero Of Pearl Harbor Attack Is Navy Day Speaker Here

Heroic work in saving his ship during the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor won for Capt. John S. Phillips, USN, who will be the speaker at Montgomery's Navy Day observance, the Navy Cross, highest award made by the Navy.

The Navy Day observance here will take the form of a city-wide civic club luncheon at the Jefferson Davis Hotel at 12:45 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 27.

Captain Phillips commanded the U.S.S. Neosho at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack. The Neosho was sunk in the Coral Sea in May, 1942.

The following citation was made with award of the Navy Cross to Captain Phillips:

"For distinguished service in line of his profession as commanding officer of the U.S.S. Neosho during the attack on the fleet in Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, by Japanese forces on December 7, 1941.

"At the time of the attack the U.S.S. Neosho was moored alongside the gasoline dock, Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor, and had just completed discharging gasoline at that station.

"When fire was opened on enemy planes, Commander Phillips, realizing the serious fire hazard of remaining alongside the dock as well as being in a position that prevented a battleship from getting underway, got underway immediately.

"Mooring lines were cut and

without the assistance of tugs, Commander Phillips accomplished the extremely difficult task of getting the ship underway from this particular berth in a most efficient manner, the difficulty being greatly increased by a battleship having capsized in the harbor."

He was promoted to his rank of captain on Feb. 27, 1942, for meritorious conduct.

Capt. Phillips, a graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, is a veteran of World War 1 and, in addition to the Navy Cross, has the Victory Medal, patrol clasp; the Yangtze Service Medal; the American Defense Service Medal, fleet clasp; and the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal.

At the present time Captain Phillips is on duty at Headquarters, Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Fleet, Washington.

Henry C. Meader, chairman of the Montgomery Navy Day observance, Saturday urged that reservations be made immediately for the Navy Day luncheon.

The luncheon will be held at 12:45 p.m. at the Jefferson Davis Hotel on Friday, Oct. 27. Members of civic clubs can make reservations with the secretary of their club and those who are not members of civic clubs can make reservations by calling the Jefferson Davis Hotel.

Early reservations are necessary because of the limited space and the expected large crowd, Mr. Meader said.

Ancient man kept time by measuring shadows cast by trees cliffs and other objects.

Date submitted 1 December 1937

Home address.....Oradell, N.J.

Father's name.....Deceased

Mother's maiden name Elizabeth V. Willian

Schools attended prior to entering Naval Academy:

Class of

While attending Naval Academy (Athletics, special achievements,
literary societies, etc.)

Married (Maiden name of wife) Elizabeth H. Maybery of Fort Thomas,
Kentucky at aboard U.S.S. OKLAHOMA when 1922

Names of children:

None

Member of the (Clubs, societies, organizations, etc.)

U.S. Naval Institute.

(See reverse side)

Brief biography of career which would be of interest for press releases. This to include also information relative to:

- (a) Unusual assignments to special duties.
- (b) Transcripts of letters of commendation of special interest.
- (c) Participation in any naval or military campaigns or engagements.
- (d) List campaign badges or medals, citations and foreign decorations received.

Served on the U.S.S. SOUTH DAKOTA during the World War, engaged in convoy duty.

Since have served on battleship, destroyers, and the U.S.S. ASTORIA; a heavy cruiser. Served on China Station 1931-34 during Japan's first thrust into Manchuria. Witnessed Japanese-Chinese "Shanghai Incident" of January 1932 and minor incidents in Amoy, Swatow, and Fuchow China during same period.

Victory Medal - World War "Convoy" Yangtse Campaigne Medal.

Signature

John D Phillips

U.S.S. NEOSHO

PLEASE SUBMIT IN DUPLICATE

The Bureau of Navigation is frequently called upon to furnish news releases for officers in connection with their service activities and assignments. It would therefore be appreciated if you would submit this form to Bureau of Navigation, properly filled out, as soon as practicable.

Date submitted 8 January, 1942

Name PHILLIPS John Spinning
(Surname) (First) (Middle)

Rank Commander, U.S. Navy

Home address Oradell, N.J.

Date and place of birth 28 February, 1895.

Father's name Russell Traul Phillips (Deceased)
(Rank, if in Army, Navy, Marine Corps, etc.)

Mother's name Elizabeth Willian Phillips (Deceased)

Mother's maiden name Elizabeth Willian

Schools attended prior to entering Naval Academy _____

Trinity Church School, Trinity Church, Wall St., New York City

Naval Academy Class of 1918

While attending Naval Academy (Athletics, special achievements, literary societies, etc.)

Data concerning college attended if not Naval Academy graduate

Married (Maiden name of Wife) Elizabeth Maybery

of Ft. Thomas, Kentucky at Aboard the USS OKLAHOMA When 25 July, 1922

Names of Children: NONE

(See reverse side)

Brief biography of career which would be of interest for press releases.

This to include information relative to:

- (a) Unusual assignments to special duties.
- (b) Transcripts of letters of commendation of special interest.
- (c) Participation in any naval or military campaigns or engagements.

List campaign badges or medals, citations and foreign decorations received.

World War Medal - (Escort duty aboard U.S.S. South Dakota until end of World War I).

Yangtze Medal - (Duty on DD's and Destroyer squadron staff from 1931 - 1934 on Asiatic Duty).

Signature

John S. Phillips